

Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment Report

North Carolina Division of Services for the Blind

Executive Summary

Numerous people were involved in this comprehensive needs assessment (CNA): most importantly the 221 people who participated in the surveys, interviews, and focus groups. Different service needs and barriers were identified but the most frequent needs mentioned by most people can be summarized as the three Ts: transportation, technology and training. The Ts were issues for all respondents except those from community rehabilitation programs (CRP) and disability navigators (DN). There were numerous suggestions for improving DSB services with the primary suggestion being to increase funding (for the 3 Ts). Other suggestions were to reduce administrative barriers (eligibility for services, paper work), better inform target audiences (medical personnel) and improve outreach to minority communities. The participant data were combined with a review of the literature to formulate the following summary and recommendations... Employment and transportation recommendations are made at two levels: client and systemic.

Demographic Trends

NC's population is 9.2 million (10th in the country). The population continues to grow with an expected increase in international immigration resulting in greater numbers and percentages of minorities, with greater growth in the Hispanic population. North Carolina will experience the 18th largest net international immigration gain in the country.

Recommendation - DSB needs to plan for an increase in applications from minority groups including international immigrants. Planning needs to include serving people with disabilities with and without documentation as well as modifying practice for communicating service availability to these groups.